2071.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia - Stories from the Census, 2016

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ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION – WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2016 CENSUS DATA SUMMARY

Population

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented 3.1% of the population in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing – this was the same as 2011, and up from 3.0% in 2006.

Of the 75,978 people who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, 96.0% were of Aboriginal origin, 1.9% were of Torres Strait Islander origin and 2.1% identified as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Age

PROPORTION OF POPULATION BY AGE, 2016(a)

Age Group	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people %	Non-Indigenous people %
0-4 years	11.1	6.4
5-14 years	22.3	12.6
15-24 years	18.5	12.4
25-44 years	26.7	29.2
45-64 years	17.2	25.2
65 years and over	4.2	14.2

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016

Since the 1996 Census, the median age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been on the rise. Twenty years ago in 1996, the median age was 20 years. This increased to 22 years in 2011, and increased again to 23 years in the five years to 2016. The median age for non-Indigenous people was 37 years in 2016.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to have a much younger age profile and structure than the non-Indigenous population. In 2016, just over half (51.9%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were aged under 25 years. In comparison, almost one-third (31.4%) of non-Indigenous people were aged under 25.

The difference between the two populations was also clearly noticeable in the 65 years and over age group. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 65 years and over was considerably smaller than for non-Indigenous people (4.2% compared to 14.2%).

Households and Families

Obligation and connection to family plays an important role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. This support can be in the form of sharing accommodation.

Households in which at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person lived were more likely than other households in 2016 to be family households (80.6% compared to 72.4%). They were also less likely to be a person living alone (14.9% compared with 23.8%).

In 2016, it was also more common for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households to have more than one family living together (5.6%) than for other households (1.5%).

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, 2016(a)

	Households with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person(s) %	Other Households %
One family	75.1	70.9
Multiple family	5.6	1.5
Lone person	14.9	23.8
Group	4.5	3.8

(a) Includes households in occupied private dwellings only. Excludes visitor only and other non-classifiable households.
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, on average, were larger than non-Indigenous households (3.3 people, compared with an average of 2.6 people for other households).

Language

In 2016, 13.3% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (or 10,103 people) spoke an Australian Indigenous language at home.

The three most identified Australian Indigenous languages spoken at home were:

- Kriol (23.4%)
- Ngaanyatjarra (10.7%)
- Martu Wangka (7.0%)

Where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live, by Indigenous Region

In 2016, over one-third (38.3%) of Western Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population lived in the Perth Indigenous Region. Another 15.5% lived in South-Western WA and 11.0% in South Hedland.

Nearly two-thirds (64.4%) of people in West Kimberley identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, while the corresponding proportion was 45.7% in the Kununurra region.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE BY INDIGENOUS REGION, 2016(a)

	No.	%	%

			(as a proportion of Indigenous Region)
Broome	4 571	6.0	28.2
Geraldton	6 169	8.1	10.3
Kalgoorlie	5 631	7.4	10.1
Kununurra	4 761	6.3	45.7
Perth	29 118	38.3	1.6
South Hedland	8 365	11.0	13.4
South-Western WA	11 795	15.5	2.9
West Kimberley	4 959	6.5	64.4
Western Australia	**75 978**	**100.0**	**3.1**

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016

Income

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were less likely than non-Indigenous people to report an equivalised weekly household income of $1,000 or more in 2016 (19.9% compared with 45.4%). Both these percentages have increased (from 14.2% and 39.7% respectively) since the 2011 Census.

Education

Education is critical for overcoming disadvantage. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 to 24 years who had completed Year 12 or its equivalent increased between 2011 and 2016, from 29.0% to 40.6%. Over the same period, the proportion for non-Indigenous people increased from 70.8% to 76.4%.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 to 64 years were more likely than non-Indigenous people of the same age to have left school at Year 9 or below (15.0% compared with 4.7%). This is an improvement from 2011 for both groups (from 19.7% and 6.0% respectively).

For definitions of the terms used above, see the Census of Population and Housing: Census Dictionary, 2016 (cat. no. 2901.0). For more information about 2016 Census data release and products, go to www.abs.gov.au/census.

Explanatory Information

An **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Household** has at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person who is a usual resident and was present on Census night.

Median age is where half the population is older, while the other half is younger.

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